

## CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES AND ORGANISATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

**PEACE UDEKA IBIYEOMIE & BOSEDE OLUGBENGA DAVID-ALONGE**

*Salvation Ministries, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.*

### ABSTRACT

*The differences in interest, opinions and goals make conflict inevitable in an organisation. The study examined the influence of conflict management strategies on the organisational effectiveness of selected manufacturing firms in Rivers State. A census study was carried out, and the population comprises the 46 management staffs of the firms. The findings revealed a strong significant correlation between the dimension of conflict management strategies and the measures of organisational effectiveness. The study concludes that there is a significant relationship between conflict management strategies and organisational effectiveness.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Conflict Management Strategies, Compromising, Collaboration, Organisational Effectiveness, Productivity, and Cohesion*

**Received:** Feb 08, 2022; **Accepted:** Feb 28, 2022; **Published:** Mar 12, 2022; **Paper Id.:** IJBMRJUN20223

### INTRODUCTION

The proficiency in having access to and absorbing essential resources through use of core strategies in business areas is a criterion for effectiveness, efficiency and successful fulfilment of purposes. Organisation effectiveness lies on employees, the leadership, business process, behaviour, structure and design, and the cohesion among the core business area. The employee performance in terms of how motivated, coherent, and productive the employees are in learning, training, management, usage of tools and the work environment are of importance as conflict in these essential areas can be a hindrance to the organisational success, likewise the process's management, individual behaviour, leadership, structure, and the environment must be well aligned to avoid a conflict of interest in the achievement of the established goals.

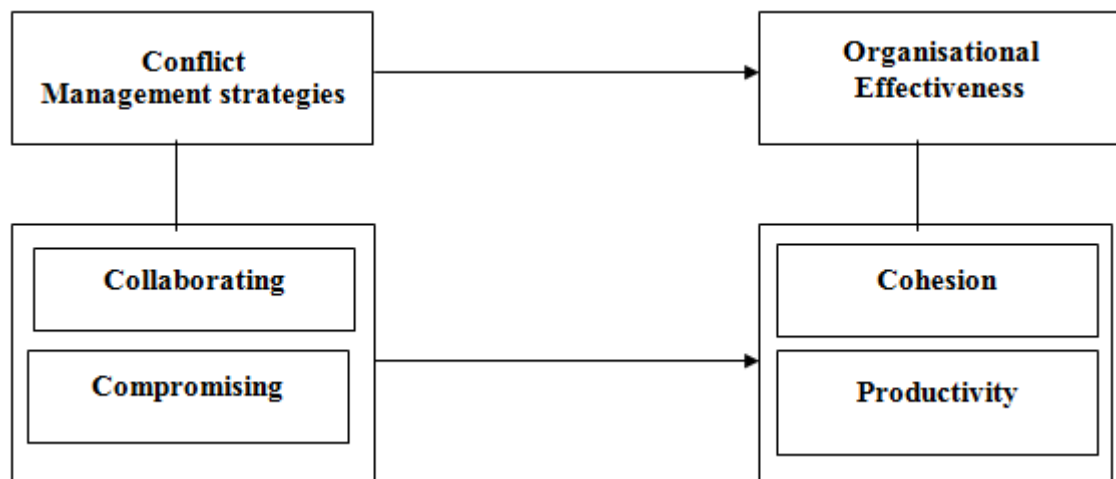
Setting a clear, achievable objectives will enhance excellent strategy for improving the organisation, but despite this conflict is inevitable and unpredictable, it could be dysfunctional (negative) or functional (positive), but most times conflict outcomes are dysfunctional, a negative outcome comes with lot of problems that can hindered the organisational effectiveness. Conflict management capability in an organisation determines its effectiveness, hence, it is essential to create a favourable environment where the workers can effectively perform their job roles without hindrances that could obstruct both individual and organisational goal achievement. Conflict occurs because of differences in interest and incompatibilities in goals. The complexity rises in open and diverse organisations (Gupta, 2013).

Conflict perceived as dysfunctional can emanate from interpersonal relations, disturbance, cynicism, and ineffectiveness, among other factors (John-Eke Akintokunbo, 2020; Gupta, 2013), but a well-managed conflict enhances collaboration, feedback, and good communication, that promotes flow of ideas for work relationship (Awan & Saheed, 2015). A functional conflict enhances creativity, proactiveness, change, good

explanation of opinions, satisfaction, human capabilities development and positive performance. Conflict can threaten the business survival and goals accomplishment (Gbarale & Tantua, 2020; John-Eke Akintokunbo, 2020; Gupta, 2013). This makes essential for management to device strategies for managing conflict at workplace, in other to ensure effectiveness in job execution and goals. The study therefore examines conflict influence on the organisational effectiveness.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How does collaboration influence cohesion in the manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria?
- How does collaboration influence productivity of the manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria?
- To what extent does compromising influences cohesion in the manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria?
- How does compromising influences productivity of the manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria?



**Figure 1: Operational Framework of Conflict Management Strategies and Organisational Effectiveness.**  
Source: Researcher (2022).

## CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Cooperation, competition, and conflict are universal, normal, eminent and occur in the social life and the workplace. Stakeholders in the organisation have different interest and incompatible goals which make conflict to be inevitable in the workplace. Conflict has been defined in several ways; a disagreement over substance or emotional bitterness that sometimes occur from personality clashes, mistrust, anger, and stress/burnout (Gbarale & Tantua, 2020), "the appearance of difference, difference of opinions, of interests" (Follett 1924 in Onnam, 2011); conflict is interest differences among parties, resulting in intrusion into other party's goal attainment and with antagonism (Zeb-Obipi, 2019). Conflict is a misunderstanding, disagreement, expression of hostility, rivalry, antagonism, friction, cynicism (negative attitudes), aggression that occurs among different parties or stakeholder in the organisation because of differences in interest, and incompatible interest and goals.

Different conflicts exist at workplace, such as relationship, task, and value conflicts. The task conflicts are disagreement on job roles and work assignment; this includes disputes on task and resources division, differences in policies, procedures and opinions on work execution, judgement, and management. Sometimes task conflict has deeper roots and more complexity. Relationship conflict, the most common conflict occurs when people are not accommodative

and did not understand other's feelings and differences, personalities, perspectives, variances in tastes, styles, opinions, experiences, and beliefs, while value conflict occurs because of fundamental differences in identities and values, which comprises differences in ethics, norms, beliefs, work decisions and policies. There are many reasons conflicts occur, among which are ambiguous work roles, personal differences, dependency, style differences, competition for scarce resources, underperformance, burnout, underperformance, and unrealistic expectations. Conflict theory is based on the philosophy that groups usually compete for inadequate resources and control, which often result in inequalities as people with more power and resources try to maintain it to suppress others (Shonk, 2021).

The focus of all organisations is a suitable conducive environment where workers execute their duties effectively with no negative influence that could hinder the achievement of organisational goals (John Eke and Akintokunbo, 2021) hence conflict management. Conflict management is the method by which disagreements are resolved to minimise negative results and prioritised positive results and its benefits (Valamis, 2021). Conflict management is a procedure for handling disagreements and clashes among employees.

The most used conflict techniques are competing, collaborating, avoiding, accommodating, and compromising. Accommodating neglect one's wants and needs for others need, by cooperating at one's expense. Most often used when dealing with more competent and knowledgeable persons. Avoiding stays away from issues not worth being emotionally involved. This type of method does not help others in reaching their goals, neither does it help the person avoiding the issue. Competing involves being assertive in one's stance and Compromising has no wins. The two parties' resort to agreement on the issue discussed to provide satisfactory solution. Ineffective conflict management has associated costs such as employee turnover, wastages of resources, time and money and poor decisions. The study used two of these strategies (collaborating and compromising) to observe influence of conflict on the organisational effectiveness.

### **Collaboration**

A procedure that seeks a "win-win" for all, since all parties' needs are met, and parties feel valued to have their matters well-thought-out. Collaboration requires creativity, open-mindedness, and reframing issue for effective collaboration. This method strengthens, protects relationships, and produces respect amongst the workers. The method is most appropriate when you are wrong, when there is a need for harmony, no possibility of you winning, the matter is more important to others, when it is not one's right time but to build credit for future and learn.

### **Compromising**

When compromising, no party involved "wins, but each will partially get what they want. This method can be effectively used to satisfy both parties. This strategy has co-ownership of solutions, to enhance thought change with new suggested options and information and to ensure cooperation and stop hostility and hard feelings (Gupta, 2013).

## **ORGANISATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS**

Every organisation seeks effective processes, services, and management. Effectiveness is being successful in producing a result or a desired output or goal, and the competence in achieving its goals (Robbins, 2009). Organisational effectiveness measures how meticulously, resourcefully, and efficiently a company pursues the achievement of its goals and doing the right things at workplace (Gupta, 2013).

### **Productivity**

Productivity is the ratio between output of work and resources input in creating wealth or advancing economic activities (Citeman, 2009), the quantity produced (output) and the resources used during production (input) in the production process of creating wealth. "It is the ratio between the output of wealth (goods and services) and resources input in production. Thus, improving productivity is an important goal of all businesses today. Despite the various methods of increasing productivity, the essence is attaining the correct mix of firmness and adapting to new conditions.

### **Cohesion**

Cohesion is the bond existing among team members that make them remain as a group. Towler suggests that cohesiveness is the bond that makes a team stay together (2019). Team cohesiveness is the tie that gives a team drive needed to complete a task. Every team member is obligated for responsibility and accountability for team effectiveness towards a common goal, hence team cohesiveness. A team cohesion is dynamic and more than coordination and cooperation, it involves engaging in collective work produces more innovative and productive outcomes that exceed the simple sum of individual efforts and showing mutual commitment to challenging goals to reach an all-encompassing purpose (Towler, 2019), making it essential for management to enhance team cohesiveness at workplace. Cohesiveness progresses and measures both individual and team effectiveness (Salas et al., 2015). Cohesion enhances merging competence for convergent and divergent thinking that builds creativity and knowledge generation (Hoegl & Parboteeah, 2007).

## **CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND ORGANISATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS**

Conflict management identifies conflict and manage conflict wisely, impartially, and efficiently. Conflict occurs when everyone exhibits how valuable they are at workplace, and this brings disputes among the parties involved. Although conflict among workers is inevitable, it must be efficiently managed. The responses and manners of handling these conflicts will determine the organisational success. A well-managed conflict brings change and enhances effectiveness at work, while an unmanaged conflict will negatively affect the organisational goals.

Effectiveness is the extent an organisation achieves its goals or mission, through provision of constructive conflict management efficiency at workplace. Indeed Editorial Team (2021) suggest that possessing the right skills like active listening, humour, responsibility, open communication, stress management, respectful nonverbal communication, impartiality, positivity, emotional intelligence, patience, decision-making ability, empathy, problem solving, mediation, assertiveness, facilitation, criticism avoidance and being perceptive to providing solution skills are keys to effective conflict management.

Conflict and its associated hidden costs have enormous impacts on the organisational effectiveness, having a strategic approach to managing this conflict will reduce its negative effects, as conflicts are normal in all institutions and unavoidable. Conflict management strategies are important for workplace effectiveness as it reduces burnout/stress, unproductive behaviour, turnover, and absenteeism. When effectively managed, it improves work efficiency, relationship, engagement, commitment, satisfaction, goal attainment, enhances coordinated team cohesion, ideas, solutions, and new insights. Managing conflict requires knowing the source, asking the right question, questioning the relevant person, keeping everyone united, given guidance on roles and encouraging participation at all levels (Rivera, 2020).

**From The Preceding Literature, The Following Relationships are Hypothesised in their Null Forms:**

- **H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between collaboration and cohesion in the manufacturing firms in Rivers

State.

- **H02:** There is no significant relationship between collaboration and productivity of the manufacturing firms in Rivers State.
- **H03:** There is no significant relationship between compromising and cohesion in the manufacturing firms in Rivers State.
- **H04:** There is no significant relationship between compromising and productivity of the manufacturing firms in Rivers State.

## METHODOLOGY

A survey of 5 manufacturing firms in River's state was made. The study population comprises the 46-management staff of these establishments. A census study was carried out. Both primary and secondary data were used. The questionnaire was used to generate the primary data. 4-point Likert-scale was adopted in this study. Pearson Product-moment correlation coefficient was used to test the research hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance.

## DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Table 1 shows the results of the association between collaboration and team cohesion. The table relates to the first hypothesis.

**Table 1: Collaboration and Cohesion**

Correlations			
		Collaboration	Cohesion
Collaboration	Pearson Correlation	1	.791**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	46	46
Cohesion	Pearson Correlation	.791**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	46	46

Source: SPSS Output, 2022.

The result of the analysis in Table 1 shows a significant level  $p < 0.05$  ( $0.000 < 0.05$ ), this means that there is a significant relationship between collaboration and cohesion. A correlation value of  $r = 0.791$  implies a strong positive relationship between collaboration and cohesion. This entails that, as one variable increases, the other increases, a positive impact on collaboration will lead to a corresponding increase in the level of cohesion. The study therefore discovered a strong positive and significant association between collaboration and cohesion. Considering this, the study rejects the null hypothesis and accepts the alternate hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between collaboration and cohesion.

**Table 2: Collaboration and Productivity**

Correlations			
		Collaboration	Productivity
Collaboration	Pearson Correlation	1	.780**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	46	46
Productivity	Pearson Correlation	.780**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	46	46

Source: SPSS Output, 2022.

The result of the analysis in Table 2 shows a significant level  $p < 0.05$  ( $0.000 < 0.05$ ), this means that there is a significant relationship between collaboration and productivity. A correlation value of  $r = 0.780$  shows a strong positive relationship between collaboration and productivity. This depicts that as a variable increases the other increases. This means, a positive impact of collaboration will lead to a corresponding increase in productivity. The study observes a strong positive and significant association between collaboration and productivity. The study, therefore, rejects the null hypothesis and accepts the alternate hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between collaboration and productivity.

**Table 3: Compromising and Cohesion**

Correlations			
		Compromising	Cohesion
Compromising	Pearson Correlation	1	.765**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	46	46
Cohesion	Pearson Correlation	.765**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	46	46

Source: SPSS Output, 2022.

The result of the analysis in Table 3 shows a significant level  $p < 0.05$  ( $0.000 < 0.05$ ), indicating a significant relationship between compromising and cohesion. A correlation value of  $r = 0.765$  suggest a strong positive relationship between compromising and cohesion. This shows that as one variable increases, the other increase, an increase compromising will lead to a corresponding increase in cohesion. The study therefore observes a strong positive and significant association between compromising and cohesion. Considering this, the study therefore rejects the null hypothesis and accepts the alternate hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between compromising and cohesion.

**Table 4: Compromising and Productivity**

Correlations			
		Compromising	Productivity
Compromising	Pearson Correlation	1	.685**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	46	46
Productivity	Pearson Correlation	.685**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	46	46

Source: SPSS Output, 2022.

The result of the analysis in Table 4 shows a significant level  $p < 0.05$  ( $0.000 < 0.05$ ), representing a significant relationship between compromising and productivity. A correlation value of  $r = 0.685$  suggest a strong positive relationship between compromising and productivity. This signifies that as one variable increases, the other increase, an increase

compromising will lead to a corresponding increase in productivity. The study therefore observes a strong positive and significant association between compromising and productivity. The study therefore rejects the null hypothesis and accepts the alternate hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between compromising and productivity.

### **Discussion of Findings**

Drawing from the bivariate analysis, the findings revealed that a significant relationship exists amongst the dimensions of conflict management strategies and the measures of organisational effectiveness. Comprehensive thoughts in line with the hypotheses are given:

#### **Compromising and Organisational Effectiveness**

The relationship between collaboration and organisational effectiveness was examined with the hypothesis one and two. The findings revealed a positive strong significant relationship with P-value of 0.000, which was less than 0.05 level of significant ( $p\text{-value} = 0.000 < 0.05$ ). Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected owing that collaboration relates to organisational effectiveness significantly. The outcome revealed a strong positive correlation for both collaborating and cohesion and ( $r = 0.791$ ) and collaborating and productivity ( $r = 0.780$ ). This indicates that when collaboration in the manufacturing firms increase, the effectiveness increases. This finding agrees with that of Harris (2005) that suggests that collaboration among employees in executing work results in effectiveness and better connections to elements of the environment such as customers, suppliers, and regulators. It is also in line with the study of Woodland & Hutto (2012) that posits that increase stakeholder capacity to engage in efficient and effective collaborative practices correlate with indicators of organisational impact and outcomes.

#### **Compromising and Organisational Effectiveness**

The relationship between Compromising and Organisational effectiveness was examined with the  $H_{o3}$  and  $H_{o4}$ . The findings revealed a positive strong significant relationship with P-value of 0.000, which was less than 0.05 level of significant ( $p\text{-value} = 0.000 < 0.05$ ). Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected owing that compromising relates to organisational effectiveness significantly. The outcome revealed a strong positive correlation for both compromising and cohesion ( $r = 0.765$ ) and compromising and productivity ( $r = 0.685$ ). This indicates that when compromising in the manufacturing firms increase, the effectiveness at workplace increases. This finding conforms to that of John-Eke & Akintokunbo (2020) that studied conflict management as a tool for increasing organisational effectiveness and the findings reveal a correlation between conflict management strategies and organisational effectiveness. It also agrees with the findings of Gbarele and Tantua (2020) that show a significant relationship between the conflict management and organisational productivity.

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study examines conflict management strategies and organisational effectiveness of manufacturing firms in Rivers State. The findings revealed that conflict management strategies correlate the organisational effectiveness of the manufacturing firms in Rivers state. The dimensions of conflict management strategies used are collaborations and compromising, while the measures of organisational effectiveness are cohesion and productivity. The findings show a strong significant relationship between conflict management strategies and organisational effectiveness; thus, the study concludes that conflict management strategies correlates with the organisational effectiveness of the manufacturing firms.

Based on the findings and conclusion, the following recommendations are appropriate:

- The manufacturing firms should adopt suitable conflict management strategies for organisational effectiveness
- The management should promote collaboration to enhance workplace efficiency
- The firms should apply compromising when finding a solution to satisfy both parties involved.

## REFERENCES

1. Awan, A.G., & Saeed (2015). *Conflict management and organisational performance: A Case Study of Askari Bank Ltd. Research Journal of Finance and Accounting*. 6(11), 88-102.
2. Citeman (2009). *Industrial productivity*. Citeman.Com, <https://www.citeman.com/8128-industrial-productivity>
3. Gbarale, K. G. & Tantua, E. (2020). *Conflict management strategies and organisational productivity in the banking sector in Rivers State, Nigeria. International Journal of Management and Marketing Systems*, 13(8), 73–85.
4. Gupta, B. (2013). *Conflict Management: Need for Organisation Effectiveness. International Journal of Engineering and Management Research*, 3(5), 61-65.
5. Harris, C. (2005). *Collaboration for organisation success: Linking organisation support of collaboration and organisation effectiveness. Doctor of Philosophy (Industrial and Organisational Psychology)*, 1-248. <https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/>
6. Hoegl, M., & Parboteeah, K. P. (2007). *Creativity in innovative projects: How teamwork matters. Journal of Engineering and Technology Management*, 24, 148–166.
7. Indeed Editorial Team (2021). *What is Conflict management? Indeed.Com*, <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/>
8. John-Eke, E. C., & Akintokunbo, O. O. *Conflict management as a tool for increasing organisational effectiveness. International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social sciences*, 10(5), 299–311, <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBS/v10-i5/7198>
9. Newell, M.W. (2008). *Preparing for the project management professional (PMP) certification exam*. (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). AMACOM.
10. Oinam G. S. (2011). *Conflict resolution: A definition of Mary Follett. EPAO.Net*, <http://epao.net/epSubPageExtractor.asp?src=leisure.Essays.Gitchandra.Oinam.Conflict.Resolution.a.definition.of.Mary.Follett1#>
11. Rivera, M. (2020). *Conflict management strategies for easing workplace tension. The Blueprint*,
12. <https://www.fool.com/the-blueprint/conflict-management/>
13. Robbins, S. P. (2009). *Organisational theory: Structure, design and application*. 29th edition, Safar Publication.
14. Salas E., Grossman R., Hughes A. M. & Coultas C. W. (2015). *measuring team cohesion: Observations from the science. Human Factors*, 57(3), 365–374. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0018720815578267>
15. Shonk, K. (2021). *3 types of conflict. Pon.Harvard.Edu*, <https://www.pon.harvard.edu/daily/conflict-resolution/types-conflict/>
16. Towler A. (2013). *The importance of team cohesion for team effectiveness. Ckju.Net*, <https://www.ckju.net/en/dossier/importance-team-cohesion-team-effectiveness>
17. Valamis (2021) *Conflict management styles. Valamis.Com*, <https://www.valamis.com/hub/conflict-management-styles>
18. Walters (2019). *The Advantages & Disadvantages of Collaborating Conflict Management. Azcentral.Com*,



<https://yourbusiness.azcentral.com/five-ways-conflict-actually-benefits-organisation-5828.html>

19. Woodland, R. H. & Hutto M. S. (2012). Evaluating organisational collaborations: Suggested entry points and strategies. *American Journal of Evaluation* 33(3) 366-383 <https://doi.org/10.1177/1098214012440028>
20. Zeb-Obipi, I. (2019). *Conflict Management. Human Resources and Management Class PhD Lecture Discussion*, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt.
21. Iyengar, Lavanya. "The Hr Competencies on Organizational Performance in IT/ITES Companies in Chennai." *International Journal of Human Resource Management and Research (IJHRMR)* 9.2 (2019): 59 68 (2019).
22. Binoj Ravindran Nair, Dr, et al. "Covid-19 Pandemic: Impact On Surgical Training And Trainee Perception: Need For Introspection And Strategy Change." *International Journal of Medicine and Pharmaceutical Sciences (IJMPS)* 10 (2020): 1-10.
23. Raman, Anita. "E-HRM: satisfaction level of employees in banking sector." *International Journal of Human Resource Management and Research (IJHRMR) ISSN (P)* (2019): 2249-6874.
24. Chandrasekar, J., and MA Velusamy. "Impact Of Organizational Development Interventions." *International Journal of Human Resource Management and Research* 7.6 (2017): 1-6.

